

Education Cabinet

Kentucky's unemployment rate drops in March

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FRANKFORT — Kentucky's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell from 5.7 percent in February 2007 to 5.4 percent in March 2007, according to the Office of Employment and Training, an agency of the Kentucky Education Cabinet. March 2007's jobless rate also was below March 2006's rate of 5.9 percent.

The U.S. seasonally adjusted jobless rate decreased from 4.5 percent in February 2007 to 4.4 percent in March 2007, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

"Kentucky's March 2007 unemployment rate .3 of a percentage point below the February 2007 unemployment rate. The March 2007 rate is tied with December 2006 as the lowest unemployment rate in Kentucky since December 2004 when it was 5.3 percent. Kentucky was one of 31 states that had a lower unemployment rate in March 2007 than in February 2007," said Carlos Cracraft, the department's chief labor market analyst.

"Our March 2007 unemployment rate also was below last March's 5.9 percent jobless rate. Altogether, 46 states and the District of Columbia recorded over-the-year nonfarm payroll employment increases in March 2007 compared to March 2006, with Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin as the only exceptions," said Cracraft.

Ten of the 11 major nonfarm job North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) sectors reported employment increases in March, while one decreased, according to Cracraft. An

increase of 7,200 jobs in March 2007 brought Kentucky's nonfarm employment to a seasonally adjusted total of 1,861,300 last month.

According to the seasonally adjusted employment data, Kentucky's trade, transportation and utilities sector had the most job growth of any sector with 1,800 additional jobs in March 2007. This area includes retail and wholesale trade, transportation and utilities businesses, and warehousing, and is the largest sector in Kentucky with 381,100 employees. Since March 2006, the number of jobs in this sector has risen by 300.

"During March 2007, retail trade accounted for 1,000 of the 1,800 new trade, transportation and utilities sector jobs while transportation warehousing and utilities accounted for 700 jobs," Cracraft said.

The government sector, which includes public education, gained 1,300 jobs in March 2007. Since March 2006, this sector has added 3,900 jobs.

Kentucky's construction sector saw an increase of 1,200 jobs in March 2007. Since March 2006, employment in this job area has decreased by 800 jobs.

The educational and health services sector grew by 1,200 jobs in March 2007. Since last March, this segment has gained 4,900 jobs. This sector includes private and nonprofit establishments that provide either education and training, or health care and social assistance to their clients.

Kentucky's leisure and hospitality sector had 1,100 more jobs in March 2007. Since March 2006, employment in the sector has increased by 2,800 positions. The leisure and hospitality sector includes arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations and food services and drinking places industries.

Employment in the professional and business services sector rose by 800 in March 2007. This area had 2,200 more employees in March 2007 than in March 2006. The professional and business services sector includes professional, scientific and technical

services, and management of companies and administrative and support management, including temporary help agencies.

The other services sector, which includes such establishments as repair and maintenance places, personal and laundry services, religious organizations, and civic and professional organizations, added 700 positions in March 2007. This area had 500 more jobs in March 2007 than last March.

The natural resources and mining sector had 400 more jobs in March 2007 compared to February 2007. Since March 2006, the segment has risen by 700 jobs.

Kentucky's information sector recorded 200 more jobs in March 2007. This segment, which includes firms involved in publishing, Internet activities and broadcasting and news syndication, had 800 more jobs in March 2007 than in March 2006.

The financial activities sector grew by 100 jobs in March 2007. This segment, which includes businesses involved in finance, insurance, real estate and property leasing or rental, has added 1,400 jobs over the past 12 months.

On the down side, Kentucky's manufacturing sector had 1,600 fewer jobs in March 2007 than in February 2007. Compared to March 2006, jobs in the sector were down by 5,100 in March 2007.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' monthly estimate of the number of employed Kentuckians for March 2007 was 1,961,233 on a seasonally adjusted basis. This figure is up 10,147 from the 1,951,086 employed in February 2007, and up 48,419 from the 1,912,814 employed in March 2006.

The monthly estimate of the number of unemployed Kentuckians for March 2007 was 111,667, down 6,608 from the 118,275 Kentuckians unemployed in February 2007, and down 7,440 from the 119,107 unemployed in March 2006.

The monthly estimate of the number of Kentuckians in the civilian labor force for March 2007 was 2,072,900. This figure is up 3,539

from the 2,069,361 recorded in February 2007, and up 40,979 from the 2,031,921 recorded for March 2006.

Unemployment statistics are based on estimates and are compiled to measure trends rather than actually to count people working. Civilian labor force statistics include non-military workers and unemployed Kentuckians who are actively seeking work. They do not include unemployed Kentuckians who have not looked for employment within the past four weeks.

Kentucky's statewide unemployment rate and employment levels are seasonally adjusted. Employment statistics undergo sharp fluctuations due to seasonal events, such as weather changes, harvests, holidays and school openings and closings. Seasonal adjustments eliminate these influences and make it easier to observe statistical trends. However, because of the small sample size, county unemployment rates are not seasonally adjusted.

Learn more about the Office of Employment and Training at www.workforce.ky.gov.